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The situation in the Middle East

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 52/53 and 52/54 of 9 December 1997. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/53, which deals with the transfer by some States of their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, called once more upon those States to abide by the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions. In resolution 52/54, which deals with Israeli policies in the Syrian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, the General Assembly demanded once more that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

2. The Secretary-General, in order to fulfil his reporting responsibility under the above-mentioned resolutions, on 31 August 1998 addressed notes verbales to the Permanent Representative of Israel and to the Permanent Representatives of the other Member States requesting them to inform him of any steps their Governments had taken or envisaged taking concerning implementation of the relevant provisions of those resolutions. As of 30 October 1998, ten replies have been received, from Brunei Darussalam, Gambia, Guyana, Japan, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, the Russian Federation, Uganda and Ukraine. Those replies are reproduced in section II of the present report.

II. Replies from Member States

Brunei Darussalam

[Original: English]

Brunei Darussalam has called for Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from the territories it has occupied since the 1967 war. Those territories include the Syrian Golan, the Palestinian lands of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, southern Lebanon and the Sinai of Egypt.

With reference to paragraph 2 of resolution 52/53, Brunei Darussalam has no bilateral relations with Israel nor any diplomatic representation in Jerusalem.

Gambia

[Original: English]

The Gambia does not have a resident ambassador in the State of Israel. Although the Gambia enjoys normal diplomatic relations with Israel, it has no embassy in Israel.

Guyana

[Original: English]

With regard to resolution 52/53 of 9 December 1997 on Jerusalem, the Government of Guyana has complied with

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the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. In accordance with resolution 52/54 of 9 December 1997 entitled "The situation in the Middle East: the Syrian Golan", the Government of Guyana is firmly committed to the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and will work with the international community for the resumption of the peace process and for a just and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East.

Japan

[Original: English]

1. With respect to General Assembly resolution 52/53, Japan has acted in accordance with Security Council resolution 478 (1980); its diplomatic delegation is based in Tel Aviv. Japan believes that issues relating to Jerusalem should be resolved through the permanent status negotiations between the parties concerned, and until such solution is achieved both the parties should refrain from taking any unilateral action relating to the situation in Jerusalem. With respect to the decision of the Israeli Cabinet in June 1998 to approve a plan that would expand Jerusalem's municipal authority, Japan issued a statement that such approval of the plan by the Israeli Cabinet is undesirable in view of its possible negative effects on the peace process at a very critical stage.

2. With respect to General Assembly resolution 52/54, Japan supports Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Japan hopes that the outstanding issues will be resolved peacefully through talks between the parties concerned. From this standpoint, Japan hopes that the relevant parties will overcome their differences as soon as possible and resume the negotiations on the Syrian track. Japan contributes troops to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force with a view to supporting the efforts of the United Nations in this regard.

Nigeria

[Original: English]

The Secretary-General will be notified about the steps taken by the Nigerian Government concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of resolutions 52/53 and 52/54 adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1997 at its fifty-second session, under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", as soon as information is received.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]

1. It should be recalled that the Republic of Panama was a historical member of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine of 1947. On 29 November 1947, the General Assembly approved, by a two-thirds majority that included Panama, the creation of two sovereign and independent States clearly defined by boundaries, one for the Jewish people and the other for the Palestinian Arab side.

2. Subsequently, with a view to supervising the demarcation of boundaries between the two sides, the United Nations appointed a special boundary commission composed of five members, of which Panama was one.

3. Panama, faithful to its democratic and pacifist tradition, declares its unshakeable commitment to strict respect for and observance of international law and the relevant provisions of all resolutions and/or decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council; furthermore, it expresses its wish to support those decisions actively in all forums, within and outside the United Nations system.

4. In today's changing world, it is appropriate for Panama to apply in its international relations the policy of "responsible pragmatism" and to declare that its loyalty to the right of self-determination of peoples, as the only means of preserving security and a just, stable and lasting peace, has always been elevated to the inalienable status of a foreign policy principle, and that the acquisition of land by force is inadmissible from the standpoint of international law.

5. Specifically, in a realistic context, the Republic of Panama has taken note of the intention of the Palestinian Authority, in conformity with the Declaration of Principles emanating from the Madrid Conference of 1991, to proclaim the State of Palestine in the territory of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank on 5 May 1999.

6. The Republic of Panama maintains its appeal to the parties concerned to comply with the 1991 Madrid Declaration of Principles, endorsed by the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, and with the 1993 Oslo accords.

7. The Republic of Panama endorses in its entirety resolution 52/53, adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1997, and reaffirms that it took the decision at an early date *not* to transfer its diplomatic mission from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, in strict observance of Security Council resolution 478 (1980).

8. The Republic of Panama, in accordance with resolution 52/54, adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1997 and based on the formula of land for peace, has recommended to the parties involved that they use their best efforts to pursue the peace process through negotiation, which will enable them to arrive at a just solution.

Philippines

[Original: English]

1. Consistent with General Assembly resolution 52/53 and its stand on the issue of Jerusalem, the Philippines has expressed its support for Security Council resolution 478 by choosing to maintain its embassy in Tel Aviv rather than transfer to Jerusalem. As a matter of policy, the Government of the Philippines continues to stress whenever possible, and in the appropriate fora, the importance of Israel adhering to the above-mentioned resolutions.

2. With respect to the illegal occupation of Israel of the Syrian Golan, the Philippines has supported the relevant United Nations resolutions pertaining to an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, such as General Assembly resolution 52/54. The Philippine Government will continue to support initiatives at the United Nations General Assembly and other international fora for the resumption of peace talks aimed at resolving the issue.

Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]

1. With regard to General Assembly resolution 52/53, entitled "Jerusalem", the Russian Federation, as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, is continuing to work with the Palestinian and Israeli sides with a view to ensuring the implementation of agreements concluded earlier between them. Those agreements provide for the renunciation of unilateral action that could prejudice a negotiated settlement on the final status of the Palestinian territories, including the future of Jerusalem. The Russian Federation has expressed its deep concern at the Israeli authorities' intensification of settlement activity in East Jerusalem, and also with regard to the decision by the Government of Israel to expand the area over which the municipality of Jerusalem exercises jurisdiction.

2. With regard to General Assembly resolution 52/54, entitled "The situation in the Middle East: the Syrian Golan", the Russian co-sponsor considers that the future of the Golan should be decided through direct negotiations between the Syrian Arab Republic, and Israel based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the principle of "land for peace", which derives from them. On that basis, the Russian Federation will continue to encourage the speedy resumption of a constructive Syrian-Israeli dialogue based on the results thus far achieved in the negotiations between the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel.

Uganda

[Original: English]

Uganda was supportive of resolutions 52/53 and 52/54 adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1997 under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East". Uganda supports the ongoing peace process and calls upon all the parties to intensify efforts to find a permanent settlement through peaceful means.

Ukraine

[Original: English]

The Government of Ukraine has taken necessary measures in order to give effect to the relevant provisions set out in the above-mentioned resolutions.